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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/565,097	01/18/2006	Marijke De Meyer	505217	7358
53609 7590 04/14/2008 REINHART BOERNER VAN DEUREN P.C. 2215 PERRYGREEN WAY ROCKFORD, IL 61107				
EXAMINER WALTERS JR, ROBERT S				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
4172				
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
04/14/2008		ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

RockMail@reinhardtllaw.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/565,097

Applicant(s)

DE MEYER ET AL.

Examiner

ROBERT S. WALTERS JR

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 May 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 13-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 13-24 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-946)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SE/US)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I, claim(s) 13-23, drawn to a method for the production of a metal coated steel product.

Group II, claim(s) 24, drawn to an apparatus for performing the method of claim 13.

PCT:Lack of Unity Posteriori

Lack of unity of invention may be may only become apparent “a posteriori,” that is, after taking the prior art into consideration, in the case of independent claims to A + X and A + Y, unity of invention(i.e. species) is present a posteriori as A is common to both claims.

The inventions listed as Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: the special technical feature which is referred to Annex B of Appendix A1 of the MPEP(Administrative Instructions under the PCT, “Unity of Invention”). The express “special technical features” is defined as meaning those technical features that define a contribution which each of the inventions, considered as a whole, makes over the prior art.”(Rule 13.2). Unity exists only when there is a technical relationship among the claimed inventions involving one or more of the same or corresponding claimed special

technical features. In this case, the technical feature shared by each is the method of producing a metal coated steel product.

The question of unity of invention has been reconsidered retroactively by the examiner in view of the search performed; a review of Klaus et al. (DE 19527515) makes clear that the inventions of the groups I and II lack the same or corresponding special technical feature because the cited reference appears to demonstrate that the claimed technical feature does not define a contribution which each of the inventions, considered as a whole, makes over the prior art. This is because Klaus et al. teach the technical feature of a metal coated steel product in which the steel is treated to give a layer of Zn and then further treated by vacuum deposition of a layer of another metal (abstract). Accordingly, the prior art of the record supports restriction of the claimed subject matter to the groups as mentioned immediately above.

Election of Species

If applicant elects the Group I invention, it is subject to an election of species as following because the species are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

Category 1: (a) method of claim 13 under inert atmosphere (claim 18)

(b) method of claim 13 under air (claim 19)

Category 2: (a) method of claim 20 directed to one side (claim 21)

(b) method of claim 20 directed to both sides (claim 22)

Applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single disclosed species from each Category to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be

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allowable. The reply must also identify the claims readable on the elected species, including any claims subsequently added.

These species fail to form a single general inventive concept for the same reason given above, as the common technical feature is the method, and the method is known in the art, therefore the method fails to become a special technical feature.

Election by Phone

A telephone call was made to Mr. Heinisch on April 9, 2008 to request an oral election to the above restriction requirement, but did not result in an election being made.

Conclusion

Claims 13-24 are pending.

Claims 13-24 are subject to election/restriction requirement.

No claims are allowed.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ROBERT S. WALTERS JR whose telephone number is (571)270-5351. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday, 6:30am to 5:00pm EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vickie Kim can be reached on (571)272-0579. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/ROBERT S. WALTERS JR/
April 9, 2008
Examiner, Art Unit 4172

/Vickie Kim/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit
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